

Between Painting and Graphic Design: Elizabeth Murray's Visual Language

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Abstract

Purpose: *This study examines the painterly production of American artist Elizabeth Murray (1940–2007) as a case study that allows us to rethink the relationship between art and design at the levels of form and meaning. The research seeks to answer how the fundamental principles of graphic design—balance, contrast, rhythm, and emphasis—manifest in Murray's shaped canvases. By addressing the intersection of graphic design aesthetics and contemporary painting, the study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature regarding interdisciplinary visual strategies.*

Literature Review/Background: *While Murray is often categorized within Neo-Expressionism or Post-Minimalism, studies focusing specifically on the intersection of graphic design and her formal language remain limited. This research situates Murray's work within a postmodern framework where the boundaries between "high art" and "design" blur. It argues that her unique approach provides a crucial bridge for understanding how visual communication strategies are transposed into the field of plastic arts.*

Method: *A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. Selected works by the artist were analyzed from both formal and conceptual perspectives using descriptive analysis methods. Two pivotal works from different periods were selected for analysis: Children Meeting (1978–79) and Do the Dance (2005). The primary criteria for selection included the use of shaped surfaces, their direct correlation with design principles, and their frequent citation in existing art historical literature.*

Findings: *The analysis revealed that Murray's dynamic compositions establish a visual hierarchy that actively directs the viewer's perception. The intersection of bold color palettes and fragmented forms creates an emotional field of visual communication that resonates with Pop Art aesthetics. Findings indicate that Murray transforms the perceptual play typically found on two-dimensional design surfaces into three-dimensional pictorial volumes. Her work represents the visual language of a "painter who thinks like a designer," demonstrating how design strategies can generate complex artistic meaning.*

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Conclusion: In conclusion, Elizabeth Murray's oeuvre serves as a significant example of the dissolution of boundaries between design and painting in the postmodern era. The study concludes that her formal language contributes both to the literature of visual communication design and the conceptual analysis of contemporary painting practice. It is suggested that further research could explore other postmodern artists through the lens of design principles to broaden this interdisciplinary discourse.

Keywords: Elizabeth Murray, Shaped Canvas, Graphic Design Principles, Contemporary Painting, Visual Hierarchy.

Resim ve Grafik Tasarım Arasında: Elizabeth Murray'in Görsel Dili

Öz

Giriş ve Çalışmanın Amacı: Bu çalışma, Amerikan sanatçı Elizabeth Murray'ın (1940–2007) resim üretimini, sanat ve tasarım arasındaki ilişkiyi biçim ve anlam düzeylerinde yeniden tanımlayan bir model olarak incelemektedir. Araştırma, "Bir ressamın üretim sürecinde grafik tasarımın temel ilkeleri (denge, kontrast, ritim, vurgu) nasıl bir rol oynar?" ve "Murray'in şekillendirilmiş tuvaleri, grafik tasarımın görsel iletişim stratejileriyle nasıl ilişkilendirilebilir?" sorularına cevap aramaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, Murray'ın geleneksel tuval formatını terk ederek geliştirdiği benzersiz biçimsel yaklaşımını, grafik tasarım disiplininin kavramsal araçlarıyla analiz etmektir. Bu inceleme, plastik sanatlar ile görsel iletişim tasarımı arasındaki disiplinlerarası etkileşimi somutlaştırmak için gereklidir.

Kavramsal/Kuramsal Çerçeve: Sanat tarihinde grafik tasarım estetiği ile resim sanatı arasındaki kesişim noktalarını ele alan çalışmaların sınırlı sayıda olduğu görülmektedir. Mevcut literatürde Murray genellikle "Yeni Dışavurumculuk" veya "Post-Minimalizm" ekseninde değerlendirilmiş; ancak eserlerinin tasarım odaklı görsel hiyerarşisi yeterince tartışılmamıştır. Bu çalışma, Murray'ın eserlerini "tasarımcı gibi düşünen bir ressamın" perspektifinden okuyarak literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Sanatçının postmodern dönemde tasarım ve sanat arasındaki sınırları muğlaklaştıran tavrı, her iki disiplinin anlam yaratma stratejilerinin ortak paydada nasıl buluşabileceğini göstermesi açısından kritik bir öneme sahiptir.

Yöntem: Araştırmada nitel araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Veri toplama ve analiz sürecinde betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılarak, sanatçının eserleri biçimsel ve kavramsal perspektiflerden incelenmiştir. Örneklem seçimi, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle yapılmış olup Murray'ın farklı dönemlerini temsil eden, şekillendirilmiş yüzey kullanımı ve grafik tasarım ilkeleriyle doğrudan ilişki kuran iki temel eser seçilmiştir. Eserlerden ilki "Children Meeting" (1978–79): Erken dönem parçalı tuval yapısının analizi için, ikincisi ise "Do the Dance" (2005): Geç dönem olgunlaşmış dinamik kompozisyon ve üç boyutlu hacim analizi için seçilmiştir. Bu sınırlama, incelenen eserlerin literatürde sıkça referans verilen ve sanatçının tasarım odaklı dilini en iyi yansıtan örnekler olması nedeniyle tercih edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Yapılan analizler sonucunda, Murray'ın dinamik kompozisyonlarının izleyicinin algısını tesadüfi değil, bilinçli bir görsel hiyerarşi ile yönlendirdiği ortaya konmuştur. Renk kullanımı ve formların kesişen yapısı, Pop Art estetiğiyle birleşerek duygusal bir görsel iletişim alanı yaratmaktadır. Sanatçının şekillendirilmiş tuvalerinin, grafik tasarımın iki boyutlu yüzeyde yarattığı "algısal oyunları" üç boyutlu resimsel hacimlere dönüştürdüğü saptanmıştır. Bulgular, Murray'ın formlar arasındaki kontrast ve ritim kullanımının,

izleyicide grafik bir afişin yarattığına benzer bir anlık görsel çarpıcılık ve ardından derinlemesine bir okuma süreci başlattığını göstermektedir.

Sonuç: Elizabeth Murray'ın sanatı, grafik tasarımın görsel düzenleme stratejilerinin plastik sanatlar alanına nasıl başarılı bir şekilde aktarılabilirliğinin en somut örneklerinden biridir. Bu çalışma, postmodern sanat pratiğinde disiplinlerarası sınırların ortadan kalktığını ve "tasarımcı düşünce yapısının" resim sanatını zenginleştiren bir unsur olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Araştırmanın hem görsel iletişim tasarımı öğrencileri hem de çağdaş resim kuramcılarını için yeni bir bakış açısı sunması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Elizabeth Murray, Şekillendirilmiş Tuval, Grafik Tasarım İlkeleri, Çağdaş Resim, Görsel Hiyerarşi

1. Introduction

With the convergence of art disciplines since the last quarter of the 20th century, there has been a need to rethink and redefine the visual interaction between painting and graphic design. During this period, it is possible to argue that art should be approached not only as an aesthetic field of expression but also as a communicative system (Drucker, 1994, s. 22). At the point where the formal structure of graphic design intersects with the pictorial surface, we see that visual language is being reconstructed.

In this context, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Elizabeth Murray's artistic practice places her at the center of this transformation; her works aim to blur the boundaries between painting and graphic design, offering the viewer a new visual thinking experience through form and color. Murray's abandonment of the traditional canvas form in favor of producing multi-part and dynamic surfaces reflects her desire to demonstrate that form plays an active role in the production of meaning. In this respect, it is also possible to relate the artist's practice to the structural thinking of graphic design. Conceiving form as a textual system of signs means creating a visual "design consciousness" in his works (Heller & Ballance, 2001, s. 54).

Using color contrast, creating linear tensions, and fragmenting the surface like a typographic layout are among the fundamental strategies that characterize Murray's visual language. It can be said that these formal strategies aim to transform the surface of the painting from merely a representational space into a communicative space (Fineberg, 2013, s. 183). Thus, the painting intersects with graphic design's functional approach to visibility; the goal is to produce narrative meaning through visual arrangement.

Intersections Between Art and Design

Fine arts are a set of creative activities through which humans express their emotions, thoughts, and aesthetic preferences through form, color, sound, or movement. Historically, this field, which aims to produce aesthetic value, encompasses disciplines such as painting,

sculpture, music, architecture, poetry, and dance. In his work *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defined art as "a free activity serving a purposeless end" (2000, s. 136). According to him, art is an action related to the production of aesthetic pleasure rather than utility.

Hegel, on the other hand, described the fine arts as "the expression of thought in sensory forms" (1975, s. 45). This approach treats art not merely as an object of pleasure, but also as an expression of the human spirit. The idea that art is a form of social consciousness has guided the modern understanding of art. Similarly, in his work *The Meaning of Art*, Read emphasizes that art is an intrinsic form of expression of human existence, defining it as "the act of recreating oneself in form" (1959, s. 22).

These philosophical foundations paved the way for the expansion of the interdisciplinary nature of art in the 20th century; during this period, graphic design began to be regarded as a contemporary extension of the fine arts, both in its aesthetic and communicative dimensions. Graphic design, like fine arts, uses visual elements such as form, color, balance, and rhythm; however, it makes these elements functional in the context of social communication.

Meggs (1998, s. 12) defines graphic design as "a modern visual language that combines the aesthetic values of art with the social function of communication." Therefore, graphic design is a field that integrates the aesthetic sensitivity of fine arts with the visual communication needs of contemporary society. This combination allows design to be positioned both as an artistic form of expression and as a cultural means of communication.

With the blurring of the distinction between art and design in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly after Pop Art and Minimalism, the formal principles of design have moved closer to the realm of art. During this process, artists such as Peter Halley, Frank Stella, and Lynda Benglis reexamined surface, form, and composition within a graphic aesthetic. In this context, Elizabeth Murray continued her pictorial production with the understanding of being a "painter who thinks like a designer." Murray's paintings are close to the communicative logic of graphic design in terms of formal arrangement and visual rhythm (Fineberg, 2013, s. 428).

2. Objective

This study examines the pictorial production of American artist Elizabeth Murray (1940-2007) as an example that allows us to rethink the relationship between art and design at the level of form and meaning. Murray's work offers a unique representation of the interaction between painting and graphic design in the postmodern era, when the boundaries between the disciplines of art and design became increasingly permeable in the last quarter of the 20th century. The article aims to analyze Elizabeth Murray's pictorial practice in relation to graphic design thinking and to reveal the communicative dimensions of the visual structure established

through form, color, and surface organization. The main element of the study is the idea of evaluating Murray's art as a representative of this aesthetic and conceptual bridge between painting and graphic design.

3. Method

This study adopted a qualitative research design and examined selected works by Elizabeth Murray using descriptive analysis. Two works by Murray from different periods were selected for analysis: *Children Meeting* (1978-79) and *Do the Dance* (2005). The following criteria were considered in the selection of works:

- Representing the artist's use of shaped surfaces,

- Being related to graphic design principles,

- Being among the examples frequently referenced in the literature. This situation was accepted as a limitation that narrowed the scope of the study but aimed to increase the depth of analysis.

The same principles of analysis were applied to each work. These principles consist of the fundamental principles found in graphic design literature: balance, contrast, rhythm, emphasis/visual hierarchy, color, formal structure, visual rhetoric/meaning layer. These principles and methods were chosen to evaluate both the formal and communicative aspects of the works. The works were examined using high-resolution images obtained from museum archives. The descriptive analysis process was carried out by first evaluating the overall composition of each work and then systematically analyzing it according to the principles mentioned above.

4. Findings

Elizabeth Murray and Her Art

Elizabeth Murray (b. 1940, Chicago, Illinois - d. 2007, Granville, New York) is considered one of the leading figures in American painting for nearly half a century and a prominent representative of postmodern abstract art. Her artistic practice uniquely combines a Minimalist approach inspired by Cubism's formal explorations with a Surrealist sensibility specific to everyday life. Murray's works are notable for her strong interest in the materiality of paint and her sculptural approach to the painting surface. The artist treats the canvas not merely as a surface, but as an object that can be bent, twisted, broken into pieces, and reshaped. In this respect, his works go beyond formal experimentation and carry a personal layer of meaning that touches on human themes such as birth and death, laughter and astonishment, existence and non-existence. Murray's innovative approach has both redefined the medium of painting and established his unique visual language as defining within the context of contemporary art.

Murray has been interested in art since childhood and has always aspired to become a cartoonist. During his high school years, with the support of his teacher Elizabeth Stein, he enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago, aiming for a career in commercial art. However, during his education, he preferred to learn from the works of masters in museum collections rather than from academic courses. During this period, he focused on the works of El Greco, Francisco de Zurbarán, Georges Seurat, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso. However, it is evident that the artistic influences that most shaped his direction as an artist were the painting styles of Paul Cézanne and Willem de Kooning. After graduating in 1962, Murray continued her graduate studies at Mills College in Oakland, California, and moved to New York in 1967, where she continued her production until the end of her life.

Elizabeth Murray's works in the 1960s reflect an experimental and innovative approach to the materiality of paint. During this period, the artist continued to make references to figures, inspired by her longstanding interest in caricature, while also pushing boundaries with sculptural elements. Murray's childhood passion for Walt Disney and comic books can be seen to have guided her artistic production at various stages of her career. In the 1970s, the artist adopted a method of deconstructing and reconstructing the compositional strategies and theoretical approaches associated with Minimalism. Loosely inspired by mathematical ideas, curved lines and created geometric structures that transform scale, shape, and form in his intensely painted and layered compositions with complex shapes.

In the 1980s, he completely departed from the traditional flat and linear composition by adding three-dimensionality to his canvases. The paintings of this period, with their blurred and gestural expression, combined with characteristic elements such as interiors, tables, coffee cups, and shoes, along with spray paint drips and graffiti-like marks, paved the way for the artist's international recognition. In the 1990s, Murray's work took on a simpler and more refined form while retaining its compositional subtlety and exuberant use of color. In the final phase of his career, he brought different perspectives and new formal interpretations to his characteristic motifs in multi-panel paintings rendered in vivid colors.

Elizabeth Murray has not only been a prolific artist throughout her career, but has also been recognized as a sought-after educator, visiting artist, and instructor. Among her academic and educational contributions are teaching at Rosary Hill College (1965-1967), visiting artist positions at Wayne State University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1973), teaching at Bard College (1974-1977) and guest teaching at the California Institute of the Arts (1975-1976). Murray held faculty positions at Princeton University (1977) a faculty position at Yale University (1977-1980), a faculty position at the New York School of Visual Arts (1978-1980) and faculty positions at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture during different periods (1979, 1985, 1992). In addition, he was a faculty member at the Maryland Institute College of Art (1981), a faculty member at the New York Studio Drawing, Painting, and

Sculpture School (1987), and guest curator of the exhibition "Artist's Choice: Elizabeth Murray" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1995). In the later stages of his career, he served as a visiting professor of studio arts at Bard College (1999-2003) and as a faculty member at Brooklyn College (2003-2007).

Murray has been honored with numerous awards in recognition of his work. These include the Walter M. Campana Award from the Art Institute of Chicago (1982) an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1984) the Painting Medal from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1986) an honorary doctorate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1992) election as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York (1992) the Larry Aldrich Award (1993) an honorary degree from the Rhode Island School of Design (1993) a MacArthur Fellowship (1999) Honorary Doctorate from The New School (2001) National Artist Award from Anderson Ranch Art Center (2002) Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement from the College Art Association (2007) and an award from CITYarts (2007) (Elizabeth Murray Art. (n.d.).

Elizabeth Murray is recognized as one of the leading figures in postmodern abstraction in American painting. The artist abandoned traditional canvas formats, creating multi-part, dynamic surfaces that blurred the boundaries between painting and sculpture. With this approach, Murray contributed to the redefinition of painting not only as a form of expression but also as a means of communication (Art21, 2003).

In Murray's works, a visual language has been developed in which forms and colors interact energetically, transforming the viewer into an active participant. The artist has transformed the traditional understanding of painting by using the two-dimensional structure of the painting to guide the viewer's perception (Artforum, 2003). In this context, Murray's art goes beyond pictorial abstraction, offering a visual experience that interacts with the viewer.

The artist's works combine the colorful and energetic elements of pop art with the gestural energy of abstract expressionism. Murray invites the viewer to an aesthetic born from the fusion of these two movements, offering not only a visual but also an emotional experience (New Yorker, 2003). In this way, Murray's art presents a rich field of expression, both formally and conceptually.

Form, Structure, Meaning, and Graphic Thought in Elizabeth Murray's Works

Elizabeth Murray's art transfers the fundamental principles of graphic design -balance, contrast, rhythm, emphasis, and hierarchy- to the pictorial plane. By breaking down the traditional rectangular canvas, the artist has created organic surfaces that interact with each other. These shaped surfaces evoke a sense of movement and direction in the viewer's perception. The vivid colors Murray uses enhance the formal energy while also serving as a

"visual communication code." Wye and Weitman (2005) define this structural dynamism in the artist's work as "the physical dialogue the painting establishes with space." This can be related to the principle of "dynamic establishment of visual balance" also seen in graphic design.

Fineberg explains Murray's formal innovation as "removing the surface of the painting from being a two-dimensional plane and transforming it into a three-dimensional object of thought" (2013, s. 414). The artist cut a canvas and reassembled it through formal experiments. This method questions the role of form in meaning production. This situation possesses a formal sensitivity reminiscent of graphic design's issues of surface, form, and composition.

In Murray's artistic language, design principles such as rhythm, balance, and tension are strongly felt. Armstrong has described his works as "a tension between the movement of paint and typographic order" (2007, s. 29). Indeed, Murray's forms create visual emphases that direct the viewer's gaze, much like a graphic design layout. Formal fragmentation, color contrasts, and directional movements are elements that determine the internal dynamics of the composition. In this respect, Murray carries painting into a graphic system of thought. This is because in his works, form is not merely an aesthetic element, but a "visual language element" that constructs meaning. Foster & Krauss's statement that in the postmodern era, form has become "a material form of thought" (2004, s. 142) is precisely reflected in Murray's paintings.

On these surfaces, where colors collide and forms bend and twist, the viewer can read meaning in layers, much like observing a poster or typographic composition. As in graphic design, form in Murray's paintings conveys as much of a message as content; in short, form has become the carrier of thought.

Elizabeth Murray's works transcend the modernist painting tradition structurally, transforming the surface into a dynamic and multi-layered narrative space. In this respect, it can be said that her art converges with the formal principles of graphic thinking on common ground; that is, thought is made visible through form, color, direction, rhythm, and composition. The original contribution of Murray's work is that it makes the visual and conceptual boundary between painting and graphic design permeable.

From another perspective, Murray's works bear traces of Pop Art's color and everyday object culture, while transforming these objects and elements into abstract forms. In works such as *Children Meeting* (1978-79) or *Do the Dance* (2005), the forms resemble balloon-like typography. This can be directly linked to the illustrative aesthetics of graphic design. The clash of colors and the intertwining of forms initiate a visual reading process in the viewer. As in graphic design, meaning in Murray's works arises from the relationships between the forms on the surface. In this sense, the artist's production develops a narrative language based on visual rhetoric.

Children Meeting (Image 1) is an energetic and dynamic work that bears the artist's characteristic features. Formally, the work pushes the boundaries of the traditional canvas format, presenting a colorful and playful composition. Murray's frequent use of "organic geometry" and soft-edged figures is evident here; the children and environmental elements are positioned to create an almost three-dimensional sense of movement.



Image: 1. Children Meeting. <https://whitney.org/collection/works/2896>

The work features an asymmetrical yet balanced composition. While the density of forms is concentrated in the left-center area, the color distribution is arranged to counterbalance this. High-saturation red, yellow, and blue tones create distinct contrasts along the form boundaries. There is a strong distinction between the background and the organic, figure-like shapes. Repeated oval and balloon-like forms create a sense of continuity throughout the composition. This rhythm produces a movement effect that draws the viewer's gaze across the surface. The elements that first catch the viewer's attention are the intensely colored central forms. Then, the lighter-colored peripheral forms are read. The bright color palette produces an energy consistent with the images of children. The colors both create an emotional atmosphere and distinguish the shapes. Soft-edged organic forms expand the composition with a sculptural dynamism. The intertwining of spaces offers a limited spatial depth. The work expresses the themes of movement, joy, and interaction characteristic of children in an abstract way. The convergence of the shapes creates a metaphor for social interaction.

Children Meeting is also instructive from a graphic design perspective in that it reveals the psychological effect of the use of form, color, and composition on the viewer. Murray's

color palette and organic forms can be considered an eye-catching and effective method for conveying information or messages. Graphic designers, especially in visual communication aimed at children, can both attract attention and create visual hierarchy and rhythm with vivid colors, dynamic lines, and arrangements, as in Murray's work. The work is also inspiring in that it shows how deviating from traditional perspective and figure placement can be used in creative and original visual narration.

Another work by Elizabeth Murray, "Do the Dance," is one of the most characteristic works of the artist's mature period. This enormous composition consists of interlocking, twisted, and overlapping pieces of canvas. Formally, it creates a transitional space between painting and object. Here, Murray uses the canvas not merely as a surface but as a dynamic "formal field of thought."



Image: 2. Do the Dance (2005) <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/98564>

Fineberg emphasizes that in evaluating Murray's work after 1990, "form has become not a figurative representation but a direct mode of thinking" (2013, s. 415). Do the Dance is a work in which form itself is transformed into narrative. Bent, overflowing, clashing blocks of color are in motion with a sense of rhythm, tension, and direction. This movement strongly aligns with the principles of composition, balance, and rhythm in graphic design.

Although the multi-part surface structure creates an asymmetrical field of movement, the directional relationships between the parts provide an overall sense of unity. There are high contrasts between the color blocks. In particular, the orange-purple and red-green contrasts direct the viewer's gaze. The curving and overlapping of the forms produces a musical sense

of rhythm. The fragmented canvas structure creates an intermittent flow that supports the rhythm. The eye first focuses on the massive central form. Then, the curved fragments opening towards the edges are read. Hierarchy is established through directional flow. The saturated colors are arranged in a way reminiscent of poster aesthetics in graphic design. The use of color is dramatic and eye-catching. The three-dimensional placement of the canvas fragments transforms the pictorial surface into an object. This completely breaks with the traditional understanding of painting. The collision of forms, directional energy, and tension describe a choreography or "dance" theme on an abstract level.

Armstrong Murray has defined his formal approach as "recreating the rhythm of a dance on the surface of the painting" (2007, s. 33). Indeed, in *Do the Dance*, the forms are organized with an almost musical flow. From a graphic design perspective, this is a successful application of visual rhythm (repetition, alternation) and balance-breaking strategies. Color contrasts, the distribution of visual weight, and the intersection of curved and directional forms keep the viewer's gaze constantly moving.

Do the Dance also reflects the concept of fragmented surfaces in graphic thinking. Fragmented canvas surfaces, like the multiple layers in collages or typographic arrangements, form a visually interconnected whole. This evokes the pluralism of postmodern design rather than the modernist understanding of unity. Murray's forms create a graphic "line of movement" both linearly and massively; formal elements direct the viewer's eye, determining the flow of meaning.

Do the Dance is one example of Murray's approach to formal structure as not merely aesthetic but as a conceptual order. Parallel to the principles of graphic design, it can be said that formal arrangement functions as a communicative tool. Murray's approach clearly demonstrates the commonality of visual thinking processes between painting and graphic design; in both, form is both the carrier and the essence of thought.

Elizabeth Murray, Postmodern Context and Thinking Like a Designer

Postmodernism is a cultural-philosophical movement that emerged as a reaction to modernism, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. In contrast to modernism's notion of "one true way," postmodernism advocates for multiple meanings, fragmented identities, and the coexistence of different discourses. Lyotard (1984) defined the postmodern condition as "the loss of faith in grand narratives" and emphasized that knowledge, culture, and art can no longer be explained within a single holistic structure. In this context, postmodernism highlights the plurality and hybridity of cultural production forms.

In a postmodern context, Murray's practices demonstrate interdisciplinary hybridity and the deliberate blurring of formal boundaries. Within the framework of Lyotard's "loss of grand

narratives" (1984) and Jameson's critique of late-modern culture (1991), postmodern art production is pluralistic, fragmented, and navigates between references; Murray's fragmented canvases and shaped surfaces embody this trend. By cutting and reconfiguring the traditional rectangular canvas, Murray creates a visual field that encompasses both painting and object categories; this aligns with the hybridity and interdisciplinary pastiche typically emphasized by postmodern aesthetics. As Wye & Weitman (2005) note in the MoMA catalog, such formal interventions increase the viewer's perceptual participation and transform the surface into a multi-layered text open to meaning production. Murray's shaped canvases should therefore be considered a concrete example of "the agency of form in meaning production" in postmodern terminology.

According to Jameson, postmodernism is "the cultural logic of late capitalism" because the aesthetic field is now intertwined with economic and technological structures (1991, s. 4). This situation shows that art and design have become not only a formal but also an ideological field. Postmodern aesthetics frequently uses methods such as parody, pastiche, irony, reproduction, and quotation to question the modernist ideal of "originality" (Hutcheon, 1988, s. 93).

This theoretical framework has also been clearly evident in the field of graphic design. Since the 1980s, designers have embraced design approaches that incorporate complexity, historical references, and cultural diversity, as opposed to modernism's simple, functional, and orderly typographic approach. During this period, graphic design evolved from being merely a means of conveying information into a field of cultural interpretation and reproduction. McCoy noted that postmodern design views "communication not as a one-way transmission, but as a multi-layered reading process" (1995, s. 58).

Therefore, postmodern graphic design is characterized formally by typographic experimentation, collage aesthetics, visual irony, and historical references, while conceptually it creates a space where meaning is reproduced by the viewer. In this context, postmodernism positions graphic design not only as visual communication but also as a process of cultural discourse production. Postmodernism has liberated graphic design from modernist principles and directed it towards a pluralistic and participatory understanding of visual communication. Influenced by postmodern sensibilities, contemporary graphic design has gained importance as an intellectual field that questions identity, memory, culture, and power relations.

In the postmodern era, artists began to view form production not only as an aesthetic act but also as a communicative process. Murray's works are a concrete example of this understanding. While graphic design strategically uses formal tools for the purpose of communication, Murray transforms these tools into a game of expression and perception. Heller & Ballance (2001) describe the history of graphic design as "the history of producing

meaning through form." Murray's practice, in line with this definition, produces sensory and conceptual meanings through form (Fiveable. n.d.).

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study offers an interdisciplinary analysis by examining Elizabeth Murray's pictorial production within the context of graphic design principles. The analyses reveal that the artist has developed a unique visual language that strengthens the interaction between painting and design, both formally and conceptually. Murray's fragmented surface structures, dynamic forms, and high-contrast color arrangements are directly related to the principles of balance, rhythm, emphasis, and hierarchy in graphic design. These findings reveal that the artist approaches form in the postmodern era not merely as an aesthetic tool but as a communicative structure.

Elizabeth Murray's works possess an energetic visual language that blurs the boundaries between painting and design. In this respect, it can be said that the artist's production acts as a bridge that brings together the formal aesthetics of graphic design and artistic freedom. Examining this interaction in the study is important in terms of revealing not only the functional but also the emotional and experiential dimensions of visual communication.

The experiments with color, form, and surface seen in Elizabeth Murray's art are directly related to the principles of visual arrangement in graphic design. While transforming the visual organization logic of design into a pictorial language, the artist questions the boundaries between art and design. At the same time, her works represent the hybridization of visual culture in the postmodern era. Murray, as a painter who thinks like a designer, has transformed the formal principles of graphic design into an artistic means of expression, thus establishing a unique bridge between contemporary painting and the history of graphic design.

Evaluating Elizabeth Murray's art from a formal perspective means recognizing that she constructs her painting surface as a space for communication. It appears that the artist seeks to disrupt traditional notions of painting by fragmenting, bending, extending beyond, or dividing the canvas surface into layers. It is said that these formal choices aim to guide the viewer's visual perception and increase the dynamism of the surface (Fineberg, 2013, s. 187). Furthermore, Murray's use of color, form, and line elements as "design elements" in her compositions means achieving a pictorial interpretation of visual thought.

The construction of the formal structure in this way coincides with the principles of order, contrast, rhythm, and balance in graphic design. In Murray's works, it can be seen that the forms merge into one another, the surface is divided into layers like a page layout, and a visual hierarchy is established that determines the viewer's gaze. Graphic thinking is seen here not

only as a formal orientation but also as a strategy for constructing meaning through form (Drucker, 1994, s. 45).

In Murray's works, it is noticeable that forms are often curved, cut, or expanded like typographic characters. It can be said that these forms create a "reading direction" within themselves; they confront the viewer with a visual text. Murray thus seeks to translate the principles of legibility, direction, and visual emphasis in graphic design into pictorial language (Heller & Ballance, 2001, s. 92). The artist's formal approach means using the surface not only as a carrier of colors but also as a map of meaning.

Murray's aim in transforming formal structure can be interpreted as bringing the pictorial field together with graphic design thinking and transforming form from a means of expression into an object of communication. Murray thus seeks to reveal the intrinsic meaning of form and bring visual language into a contemporary plane of discourse. This study has provided an opportunity to rethink the interaction between visual arts by relating Elizabeth Murray's art to graphic design principles. Murray's understanding of color, form, and space once again highlights the importance of emotional impact, visual rhythm, and expressive power in graphic design.

In conclusion, this research, which aims to highlight the intersections between the disciplines of painting and graphic design, enables new interpretations of Elizabeth Murray's works and the formal innovations she conceived, her understanding of composition and use of color, and visual perception, order, and aesthetic balance in graphic design. Therefore, the relationship established between these two fields through Murray's art offers a meaningful contribution to understanding the common language of contemporary visual culture and sheds light on such interdisciplinary research.

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